FIRST COMICS
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NO. 18
$1.25 CANADA
E-MAN
© 1984 FIRST COMICS, INC.
Staton
POWER to the People
WAR IS NOT HEALTHY FOR STUFF
Rosemary and Time

℅FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET,
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
60201

Dear Mike and Joe,

E-Man #14 marks the return of the sort of wild and funny stories that have made this my favorite comic.

Randarr was a terrific villain. Joe seems to be much more comfortable with his scripting these days and is now giving us villains that are both funny and interesting. With the return of Samuel Boar and the Battery it seems that E-Man has finally made the transition from Pasko's craziness to Staton's more orderly bizarre humor. For all my recent complaints about his lack of humor, he is redeeming himself nicely. I look forward to each issue now that Joe has hit his stride.

E-Man is truly a great comic. This is one of the few comics being published today that makes me look forward to the next issue.

Sincerely,
T.E. Pouncey
2356 Mascot
Wichita, Kansas 67208

Dear Mike,

The first thing I read in E-Man #14 was the letter bemoaning Martin Pasko's departure and the loss of the "magic and vitality" which he brought to the book. Personally, I'm delighted that Joe Staton is now writing the series. Pasko didn't seem to be enjoying himself, and much of his supposed humor lacked any sort of genuine mirth. But what's past is past. The present seems in good shape.

Joe's stories haven't been laughing-out-funny, but they're not intended to be. They *have* been consistently amusing and exciting. Last issue's successful Chaos cross-over was a perfect example. Each conflict is allowed to reach its full potential, without being smothered by blunt attempts at satire. Mauser's battle with the Battery is divided by more humorous scenes, yet the tension never fades. As Alec and Teddy Q. were cleaning the apartment, I was thinking, "Holy Moley! Is Mauser going to escape this dire peril?" I feared that the shift to Chicago (a refreshing change) would doom Mike and Donald to limbo. Hopefully, this will never occur.

The most enjoyable aspect of E-Man lately has been Joe's handling of the characters. The decision to move to Chicago and its repercussions have been dealt with very well, and Joe is also reemphasizing the fact that Alec is still a stranger on Earth. He *would* feel a natural need to forge ahead in certain areas on his own, and his becoming a private eye is a perfect route to take.

Nova is also doing more in the way of self-determination, and she's doing so without the angst that's found in other comic-book females. Her use of her powers is a nice touch, but the ominous twinkle in her eye hints at the possible return of Dark Albatross. I hope I'm wrong: I prefer a "normal" Nova, and the constant "returns" of Phoenix in *X-Men* have been comical enough.

We're even finding out more about the life and loves of Teddy Q., too! More!

Ken Hart
259 Freeborn St.
Staten Island, NY 10306

Teddy, of course, is entirely devoted to the lovely Miss Amy Irving, and is still entirely upset by her unfair treatment in "Carrie." Dark Albatross will never ever be back. At least not in the person of Nova Kane. I promise.

Dear Mike and E-crew,

Is E-man ever going to come to Canada????

Eric James Baich
77A Fines Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan,
Canada S4N 6C1

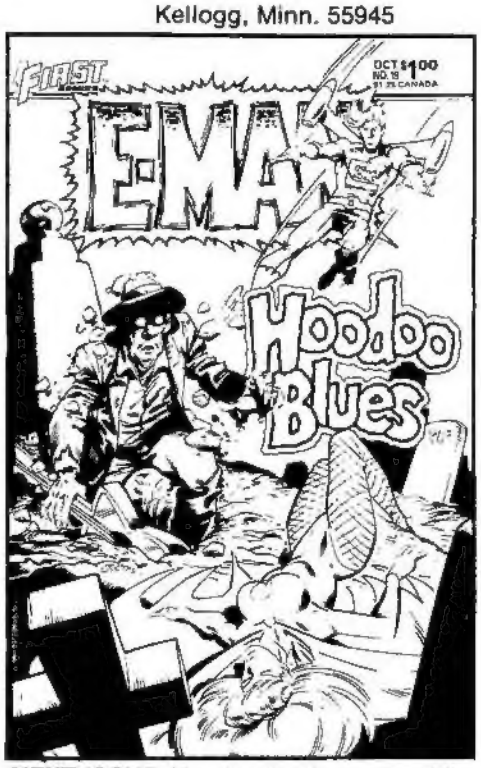
I wouldn't be at all surprised. He has been showing a lot of interest in brochures of the Chateau Frontenac lately. And he is a great admirer of that outstanding Canadian, Sgt. Preston, whose exploits he recently discovered.

Dear Joe,

Usually letter columns print mostly rant and raves on how great blah blah blah is. But E-Man's letter column really contains a lot of negative letters as of late. I tend to agree with a lot of the letter writers on *some* of the stories. But not with #14, which was very much like the old series. Could use just a little bit more humor though. Please have Nova appear in her superperson costume. I can just imagine a situation where Nova could use her powers and instead uses them up transferring from her clothes to her costume (a habit, I'm sure Nova developed when she had her full energy powers) finding out afterwards that she didn't have any energy left for the menace!

Well, anyway, I liked E-Man #14 and thought it was an improvement over the previous ones.

C.Z. Zickrick
RR1 Box 191
Kellogg, Minn. 55945



NEXT ISSUE: Voodoo is alive and well in the city of Chicago. Which is a lot more than can be said for the late Rattlesnake Roscoe. E-Man and company go to the South Side to see a dead man play the blues.

— Joe Staton

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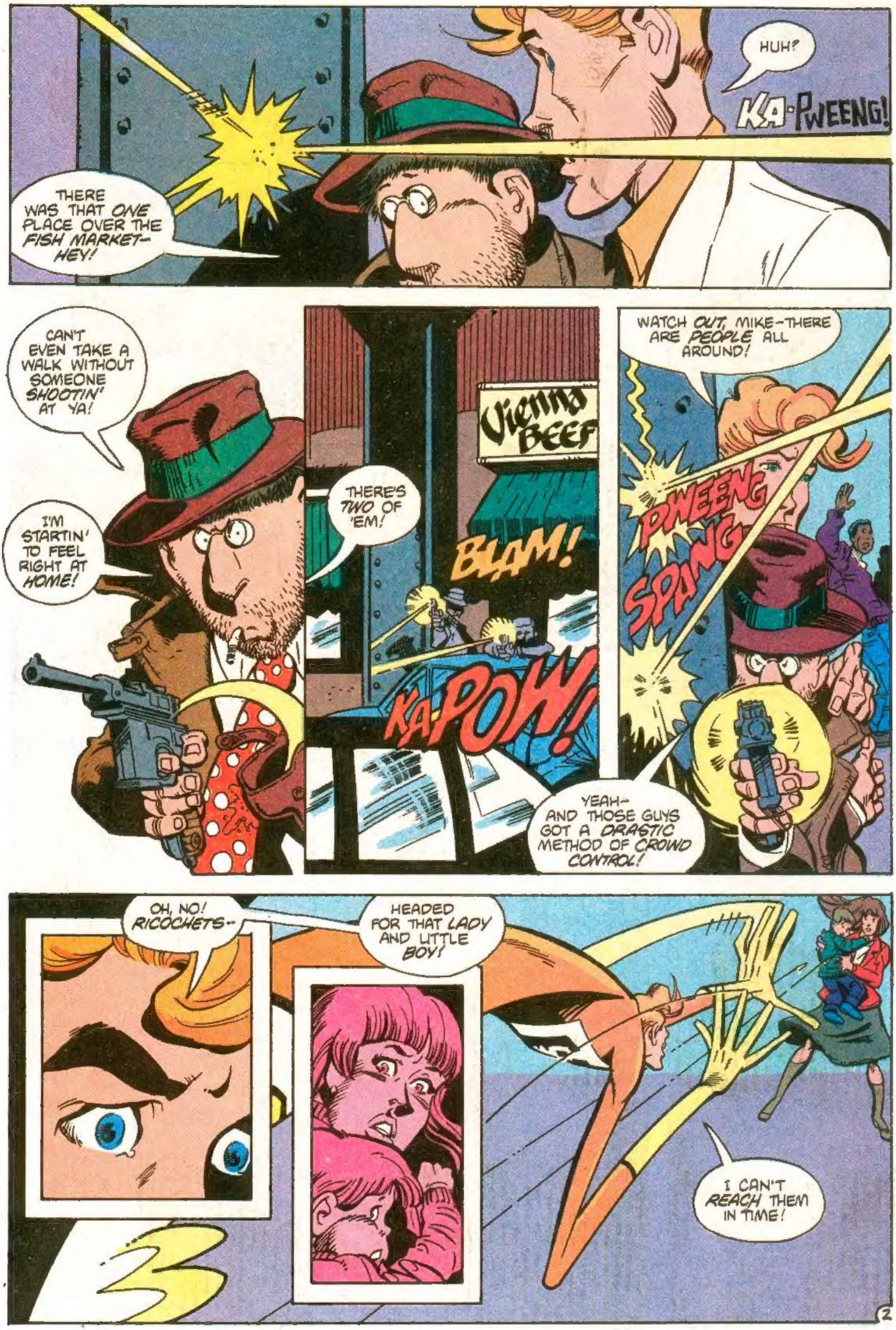
A FIRST COMICS
PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

E-MAN
created by
NICOLA CUTI
and JOE STATON
IT IS ONE OF THOSE RARE SPRING MORNINGS IN THE WINDY CITY—ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO BE OUTSIDE. AND AMONG THE MULTITUDES ENJOYING THE WEATHER IS ALEC TRONN AND THE DIMINUTIVE DETECTIVE, MICHAEL MAUSER.
by JOE STATON
and RICK BURCHETT
lettered by KEN BRUZENAK
colored by WENDY FIORE
edited by MIKE GOLD
Y'KNOW, TRONN, WHEN YOU LET THAT BIMBO DRAG YA' OUT HERE TO CHI-TOWN, I FIGURED YOU WAS OFF TO THE BOONIES--BUT THIS AIN'T SO BAD!
CAREFUL, MIKE, YOU'LL TALK YOURSELF INTO LEAVING THE BIG APPLE...
NEWS
ROMO IN GRIT!
SunTimes
THE LINCOLN PARK BEAVER ON RAMPAGE!
I DUNNO, BUT I SEEN A COUPLA PLACES THAT MIGHT BE GOOD FOR AN OFFICE...
AS MAUSER AND TRONN TAKE IN THE MORNING AIR, THEY FAIL TO NOTICE A STRANGE NEW SCENT THE SMELL OF...
Rosemary and Time


THERE WAS THAT ONE PLACE OVER THE FISH MARKET-- HEY!
HUH?
KA-PWEENG!
CAN'T EVEN TAKE A WALK WITHOUT SOMEONE SHOOTIN' AT YA!
I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL RIGHT AT HOME!
THERE'S TWO OF 'EM!
Vienna BEEF
BLAM!
KA-POW!
WATCH OUT, MIKE--THERE ARE PEOPLE ALL AROUND!
PWEENG
SPANG
YEAH-- AND THOSE GUYS GOT A DRASTIC METHOD OF CROWD CONTROL!
OH, NO! RICOCHETS--
HEADED FOR THAT LADY AND LITTLE BOY!
I CAN'T REACH THEM IN TIME!
2

BUT THERE IS SOMETHING I CAN DO!
IN LESS THAN A MILLISECOND, E-MAN TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO A SMALL BLACK HOLE-
-EXERTING A TREMENDOUS GRAVITATIONAL PULL- WHICH TURNS THE KILLER SLUGS BACKWARD-
-AND ABSORBS THEM!
OOOFFOOOFF
IT'S THE COPS! WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!
HEY, SHORTY-BETTER STAY AWAY FROM ANGEL!
ANGEL? AGAIN WITH THE ANGEL...
MIKE, ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH, TRONN- JUST FINE.
OH, THANK YOU, E-MAN. I'M--
HEY, WHAT'S THAT-?
UHH, MA'AM, I THINK YOU'D BETTER MOVE...
3

VING!
SPOI NG!
VEENG!
...I'VE GOT TO RESCUE SOMETHING ELSE!

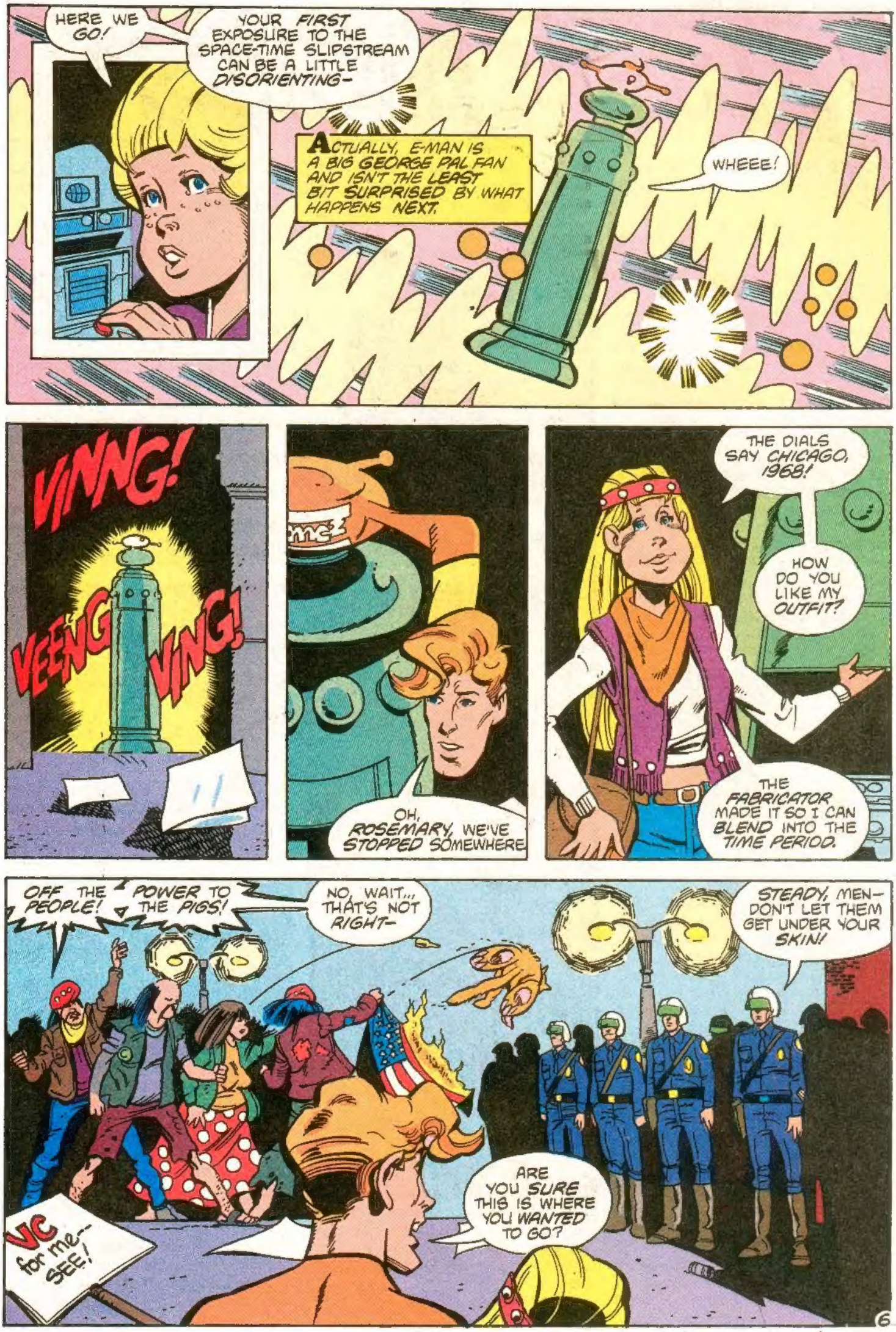
WHUMPF
NOTHING LIKE A BIG AIRBAG TO CUSHION THE FALL!

I'LL JUST SET THIS THING UPRIGHT, AND-
WHAT HAPPENED? IS IT 1968 YET?
HUH? I'VE MET PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW WHAT DAY IT IS. BUT THE YEAR-?
OH, RAZ!*
*FUTURE SLANG-MIKE.

OH, WELL... HI, I'M ROSEMARY.
I'M FROM THE 30th CENTURY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO STOP HERE- BUT I GUESS SOMETHING PULLED ME OUT OF THE SPACE-TIME SLIPSTREAM.
OOPS.

I'M AFRAID THAT WAS MY FAULT. A BLACK HOLE WARPS SPACE AND TIME, AND-
I'M DOING A TERM PAPER ON CHICAGO HISTORY, AND I'M RESEARCHING IT IN PERSON.
YOU THE GUY DOIN' ALL THE SHOOTING?
SO--?

I'M COLLECTING AUTOGRAPHS, TOO!
I'VE GOT BUCK ROGERS, REUBEN FLAGG, PRESIDENT JACKSON...
...AND NOW I'M ON MY WAY TO SEE MAYOR DALEY.
IT'S BEEN NICE MEETING YOU, BUT I'M KIND OF IN A HURRY—
SPXXXT!
WHAANG!
SPEFT!
GLOOPY MACHINE! IT'S STILL 1984!
I THINK THAT THING ON TOP IS BROKEN.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN DAMAGED IN THE FALL.
OOZHASSNY! THAT'S MY INTERSPATIAL NEUTRALIZER— IT LETS TWO THINGS BE IN THE SAME PLACE AT ONE TIME...
...I CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT IT!
AND YOU DON'T HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY IN THIS TIME PERIOD TO FIX IT.
WELL, LIKE MUTT SAID WHEN HE RAN OVER THE CAT...
"...IF I CAN'T BUY YOU ANOTHER ONE, I'LL CATCH THE MICE MYSELF!"
SINCE I'M KIND OF RESPONSIBLE, I'LL FILL IN FOR YOUR VEEBLEFETZER— OR WHATEVER YOU CALL IT.
ZAMMECHAT!


HERE WE GO!
YOUR FIRST EXPOSURE TO THE SPACE-TIME SLIPSTREAM CAN BE A LITTLE DISORIENTING-
ACTUALLY, E-MAN IS A BIG GEORGE PAL FAN AND ISN'T THE LEAST BIT SURPRISED BY WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
WHEEE!
VINNG!
VEENG
VING!
OH, ROSEMARY, WE'VE STOPPED SOMEWHERE
THE DIALS SAY CHICAGO, 1968!
HOW DO YOU LIKE MY OUTFIT?
THE FABRICATOR MADE IT SO I CAN BLEND INTO THE TIME PERIOD.
OFF THE PEOPLE!
POWER TO THE PIGS!
NO, WAIT... THAT'S NOT RIGHT-
STEADY, MEN- DON'T LET THEM GET UNDER YOUR SKIN!
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS WHERE YOU WANTED TO GO?
VC for me-- SEE!
6

FIRST NOTES

HOW TO PRODUCE COMIC BOOKS

We've received a few letters asking us why we moved our advertising pages and text features from the back pages of our books to scattered inside pages a few months ago.

If you were to pull out the staples of this comic book and cut up the pages, you would have ruined a perfectly good comic book that some day might be worth a great deal of money. So for our little experiment, please go out and buy another copy of this comic. While you're at it, buy ten or twenty and pass the extras out to your friends. I'll wait.

OK. Now that you've cut each page out, see if you can rearrange them in the order the printer prints them: eight pages on one sheet of paper, four on each side. Each side is called a "flat." There are a number of different ways you can place the pages, and our printers pick from two: 1-32-4-29, 31-2-30-3, 5-28-8-25, 27-6-26-7, 9-24-12-21, 23-10-22-11, 13-20-16-16, and 19-14-18-15; or 25-8-32-1, 5-28-4-29, 31-2-26-7, 3-30-6-27, 17-16-24-9, 13-20-12-21, 23-10-18-15, and 11-22-14-19. Sort of like origami.

We have the option of using any of these flats in each of our books, and we save a great deal of time placing the four pages we run across-the-board on the same flat and running that flat in all of our books.

Our production department saves a great deal of time — we only have to make four photostats instead of 28, we only have to paste up four, and we only have to color four. Our engravers only have to provide one set of separations instead of seven.

We save a great deal of time, and that saves us money. That effects you in one of two ways: it puts off a price increase (given all other factors remain the same, like paper and number of story pages), and it allows us to produce a wider variety of comics. It's cheap to run a comic book company if half your line is full of ersatz teenage mutant superhero superteam books.

There are other ways to keep costs down, but using across-the-board ad flats is the most common (most publishers do it) and the least offensive.

And that's why we've been running the letters page on the inside front cover — with an across-the-board ad flat, only the inside covers remain open.

HOW TO MAIL COMIC BOOKS

OK, we can make a lot of jokes about the post office, but if you are a subscriber to First Comics — or to any other direct sale comic book — please keep in mind it is impossible for us to mail your subscription copy before the comics shops get them.

Direct sales comics ship once a week, are put onto trucks and taken to comics

shop distributors and to our offices. The distributors generally get the books on Thursdays, and their stores get them sometime over the following several days.

We do not get our office copies before the shops get theirs — sometimes it takes a week or two. When they come in, we stuff them into our nifty manilla envelopes and shlep them over to the post office, which is one-half block away.

Lord knows what the post office does with them.

But in any event, you will always be able to get direct sales comics at a comic book shop earlier than you would by subscription. Quite frankly, we barely break even with our subs, and we only offer them as a service to those folks who do not live near a comic book store.

If you're getting your subscription copies more than two weeks after the stores, you might want to talk to your local post office.

And you thought publishing comic books was all fun and games.

— Mike Gold

FIRST IN MAY

American Flagg! #12: The Videorangers are all set, and Flagg's jumping squarely into the middle of the heart-pounding conclusion to "Solidarity ... For Now!"

E-Man #18: As E-Man is wisked back to the days of the Chicago Fire, Mauser encounters ... Angel! Time travelling thrills and detective chills combine for "Rosemary — and Time!"

Grimjack #2: Ostrander and Truman take John Gaunt back to the gladiator's ring for a knock-down drag-out battle with ButcherBoy! And **Rick Veitch** kicks off our new Munden's Bar series with the tale of an eight year old humanoid slug named "Jeffy."

Jon Sable, Freelance #16: The title sez it all! By popular demand — "The Return of the Cat!"

Mars #9: The booklength conclusion to the three-part World War saga! All-out battle as the Expeditionary Crew fights for its survival and Morganna is betrayed by her closest friend!

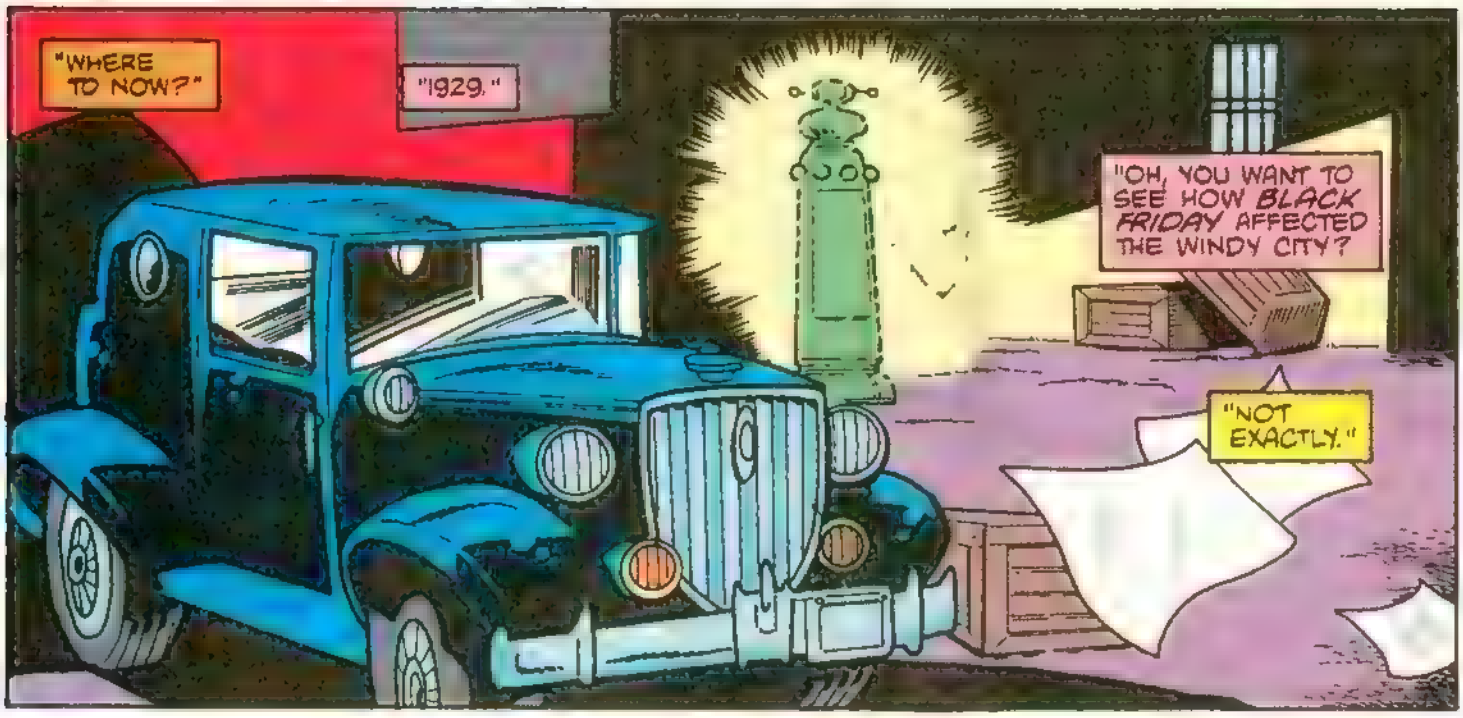
Starslayer #20: Torin is dying, while "Morrigan Lives!" And — fresh from the pages of Mars, The Black Flame moves over to Starslayer this month with the story that tells us "Who is the Black Flame?"

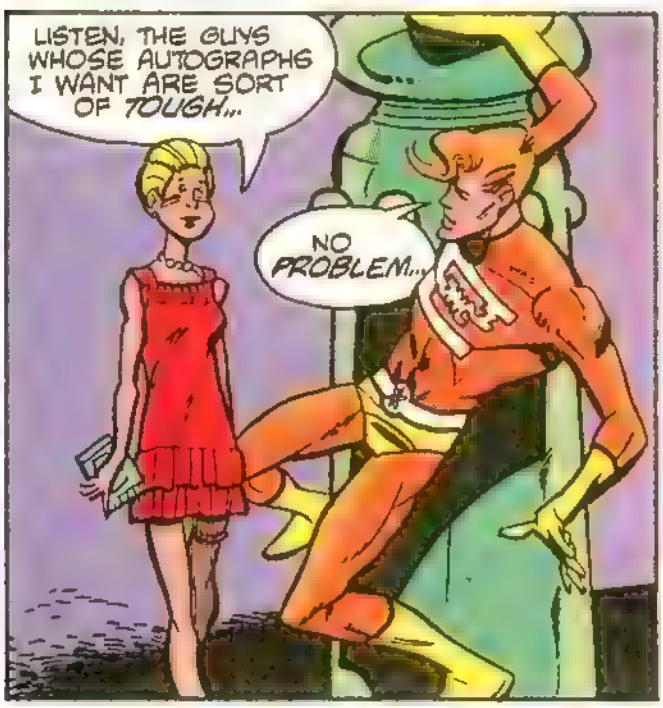
Warp #16: Chaos Prince of Madness loses his head in the culmination of the most convoluted caper that only his contorted brain could concoct: "A Night in Cynosure!"

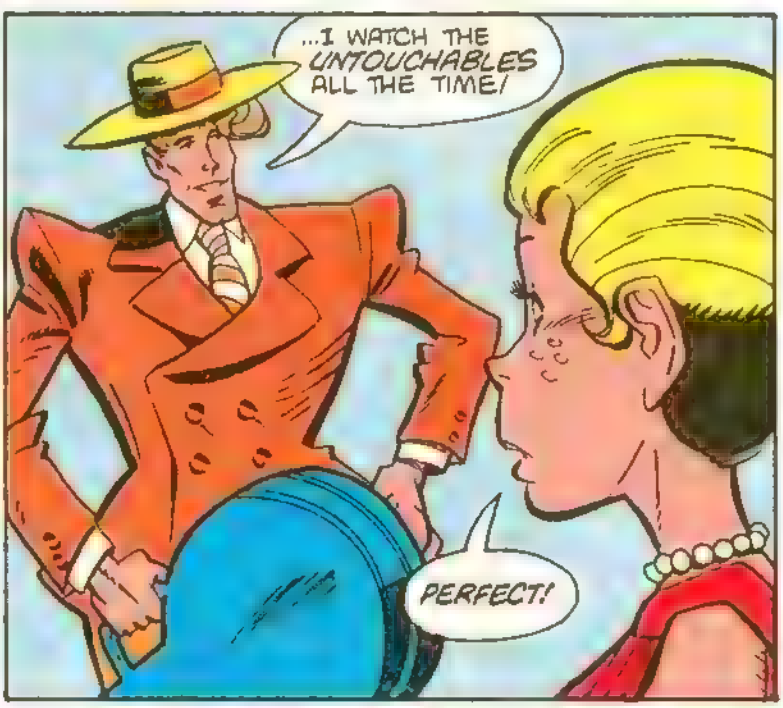
I'M LOOKING FOR THE MAYOR...
OFF THE MAYOR!
BUILD THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY!
PARDON ME-
BEAT IT, YA COMMIE HIPPIE PINKO!
AND TAKE THE WEIRDO IN THE ORANGE SLEEPERS WITH YA!
IT'S YOU-
PIGASUS FOR PRESIDENT
YOUTH INTERNATIONAL PARTY
-YOU'RE JUST NOT BLENDING IN!
WELL HERE'S A LOCAL CULTURE HERO...I GUESS-
-SO I'LL BE PIGASUS!
IT'S STILL UNDER CONTROL DOWN THERE, MR. MAYOR.
WE GOTTA KEEP DA LID ON! I TOLD DA PRESIDENT WE'D HAVE A CALM CONVENTION!
MAYOR CERMAK
7

TOO MANY GUARDS! I CAN'T GET TO HIM.
LEAVE THAT TO ME...
OFFICE OF DA MAYOR
THE NATIONAL GUARD IS ON ALERT...
LOOK OUT!
WHEEE!
GRAB HIM!
THAT COULD BE A BOMB ON HIS COLLAR!
OH, MR. MAYOR-MY NAME IS ROSEMARY, AND—
SHE'S GOT A GUN!
GET DOWN, MR. MAYOR!
BLOW HER AWAY!
UH-OH. SOUNDS LIKE ROSEMARY MAY BE IN TROUBLE!
8

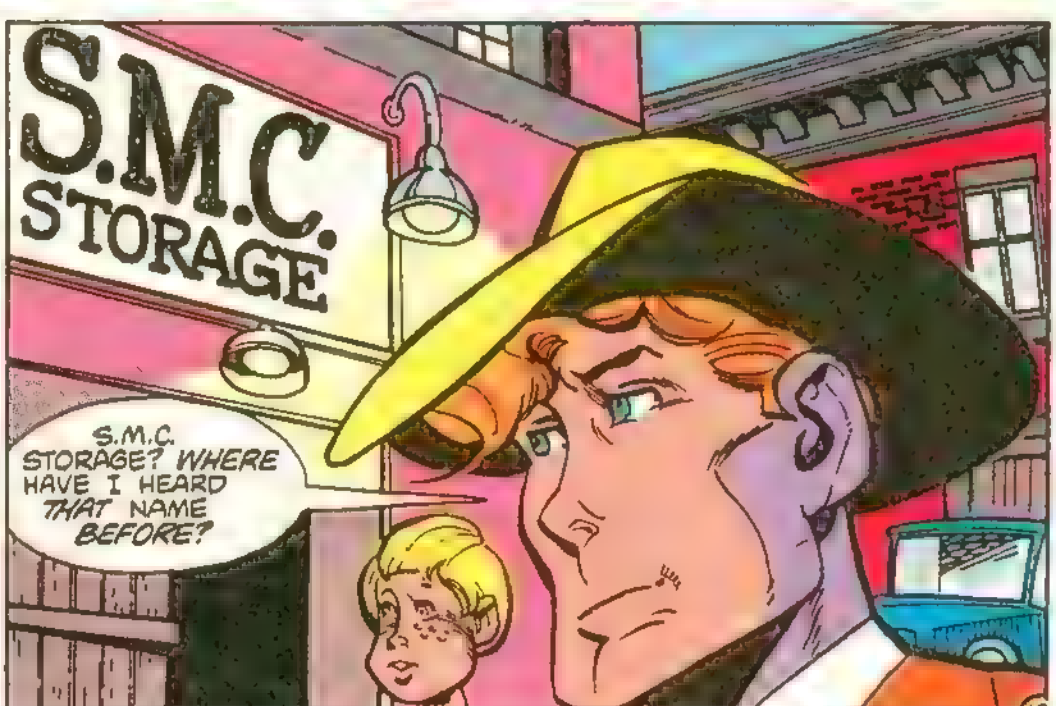
I JUST WANT HIS AUTOGRAPH THAT'S ALL...
ROSEMARY, THESE GUYS ARE IN NO MOOD TO TALK!
C'MON!
BLAM
BLAM
HIPPIE ASSASSINS!
I WAS GONNA HUMOR YOUSE GUYS UNTIL DA CONVENTION WAS OVER—BUT NOW I'LL MASH ALL DEM DEGENERATE LONGHAIRS IN DA PARK!
SHOOT TO KILL!
NOBODY MAKES A MONKEY OUTTA RICHARD J. DALEY!
I DIDN'T GET MY AUTOGRAPH!
YOU NEARLY GOT KILLED!
:sniff sniff: TEAR GAS...?
IT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF RIOT—PEOPLE ARE GETTING HURT!
MAYBE WE SHOULD HELP—BUT WHO ARE THE GOOD GUYS?
OH, COME ON, WE'VE GOTTA GET GOING!


"WHERE TO NOW?"
"1929."
"OH, YOU WANT TO SEE HOW BLACK FRIDAY AFFECTED THE WINDY CITY?
"NOT EXACTLY."

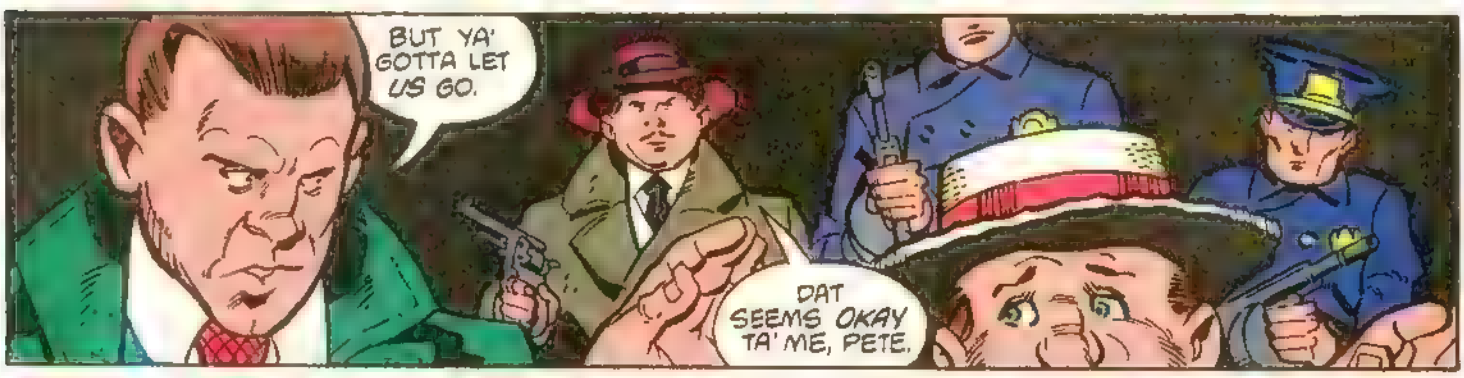

LISTEN, THE GUYS WHOSE AUTOGRAPHS I WANT ARE SORT OF TOUGH...
NO PROBLEM...

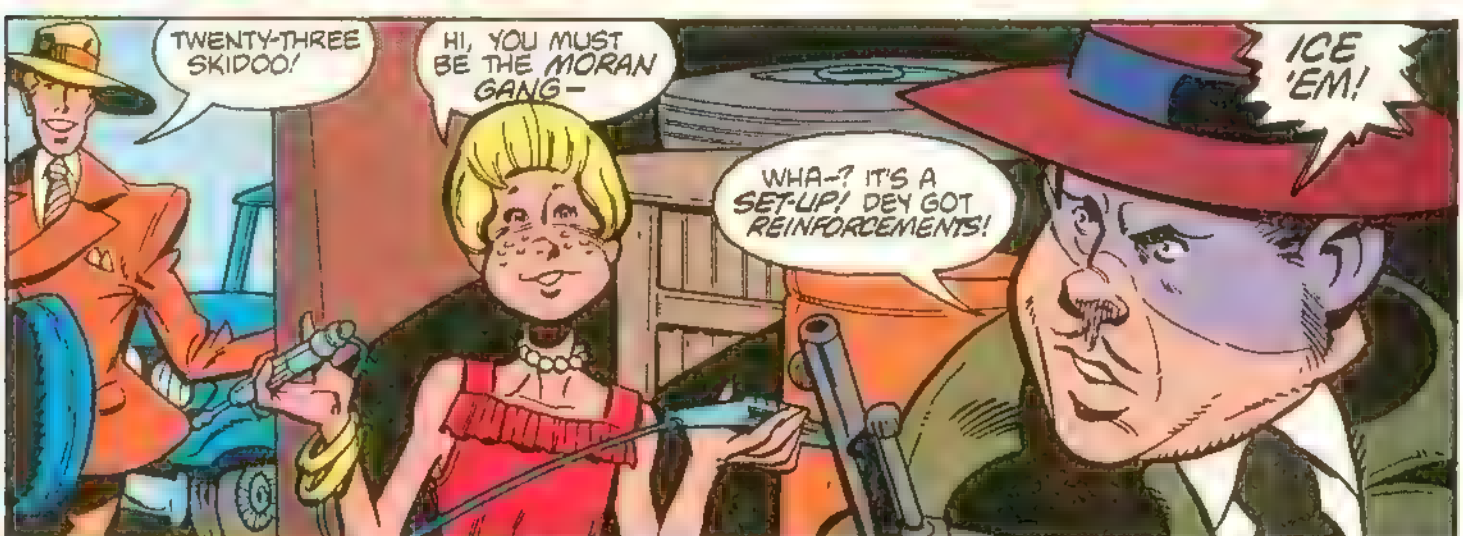

...I WATCH THE UNTOUCHABLES ALL THE TIME!
PERFECT!

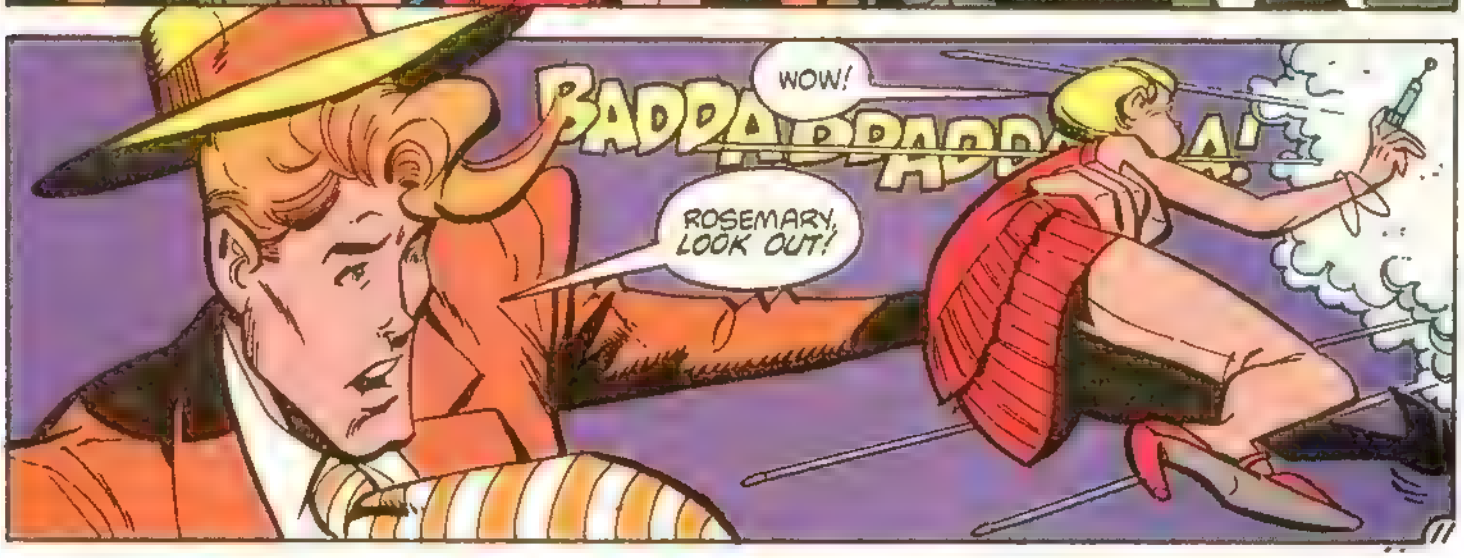
LOOK, ANOTHER TIME TRAVELLER!
UH, SURE...


S.M.C. STORAGE
S.M.C. STORAGE? WHERE HAVE I HEARD THAT NAME BEFORE?

INSIDE...
LOOK, MORAN AIN'T EVEN HERE...
...WE CAN TAKE YA TO HIM-


BUT YA' GOTTA LET US GO.
DAT SEEMS OKAY TA' ME, PETE.


TWENTY-THREE SKIDOO!
HI, YOU MUST BE THE MORAN GANG-
WHA-? IT'S A SET-UP! DEY GOT REINFORCEMENTS!
ICE 'EM!


WOW!
ROSEMARY, LOOK OUT!

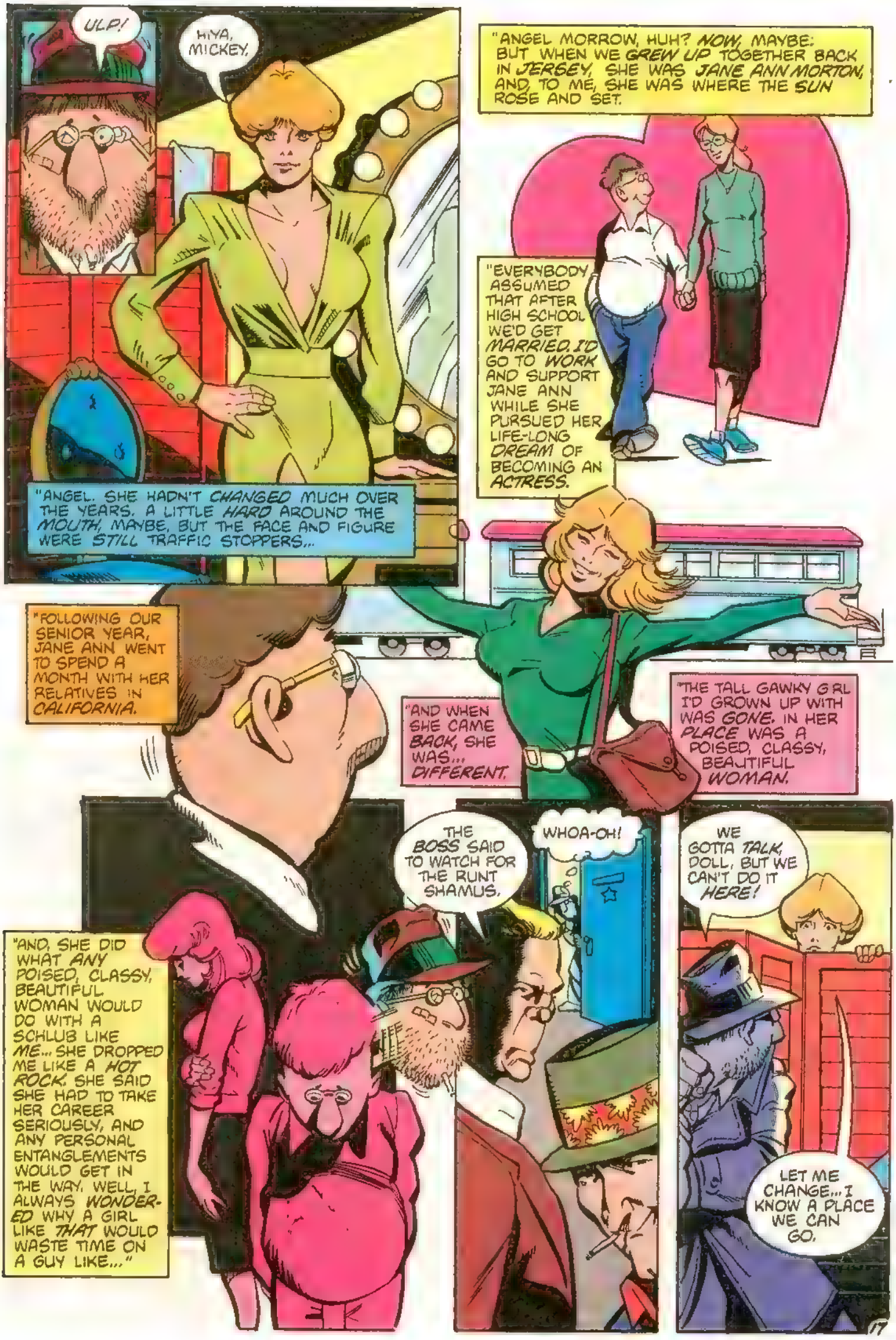
THE MORAN GANG?
DIN
ROSEMARY, WHAT'S THE DATE?
FEBRUARY 14TH.
ST. VALENTINE'S DAY!
IT LOOKS LIKE WHEREVER YOU GO THERE'S VIOLENCE!
UH, SORT OF, ACTUALLY...
I'M NOT REAL GOOD WITH THE CONTROLS. IT'S EASIER TO AIM FOR SOME MASSIVE TRAUMA IN THE TIME STREAM.
AND NOW I'VE MISSED TWO CHANCES FOR AUTOGRAPHS!
WHY NOT JUST GO BACK AND TRY AGAIN—ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT YOU'D PROBABLY GET KILLED?
IF YOU SPEND TOO MUCH TIME IN ONE AREA OF THE SLIPSTREAM, THE TOP GETS A FIX ON YOUR LOCATION, AND—
BUT THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT. YOU'RE STILL GOING TO HELP ME, AREN'T YOU?
OKAY, GET IN.
"JUST ONE MORE STOP, I PROMISE,"
"WHERE TO THIS TIME?"
"1871."
12

THAT'S TODAY'S SCARY MOVIE ON MOPPET MONSTER MATINEE, BOYS AND GIRLS!
TOMORROW— GODZILLA VS. THE SAN DIEGO CHICKEN!
THANKS A LOT, TEDDY.
YOU MAKE A GREAT BAT!
ALEC WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP ME, BUT HE AND MAUSER HAVE BEEN MISSING FOR THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS.
I'M STARTING TO GET WORRIED...
GOOD GRIEF! WHAT HAPPENED TO THE APARTMENT?
!
YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, RED?
LEMME TELL YOU...
...ABOUT ANGEL...
13

"SOME GUYS TOOK A COUPLA SHOTS AT ME DOWNTOWN. I DID SOME FAST-TALKING WITH THE COPS. I COULDN'T FIND TRONN, SO I HEADED BACK UP HERE.
"THESE APES CAME AND WENT LIKE LUCK IN A GAME OF DICE. TWO OF 'EM... BIG, MEAN, WITH FISTS NOT QUITE AS BIG AS BOWLING BALLS. I DIDN'T KNOW IT THEN, BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT WOULD LEAD ME...
Where Angel Fears to Tread
"THEY MARCHED IN AND BEGAN USING ME TO REDECORATE YOUR PLACE, RED...
"THEN THE POUNDING STOPPED AND THROUGH A STICKY FOG, A VOICE HISSED..."
STAY AWAY FROM ANGEL!
"'STAY AWAY FROM ANGEL.' I HAD HEARD THAT A LOT SINCE COMING TO THE WINDY CITY. I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK IT WAS THE ILLINOIS STATE MOTTO."
BRRNGG!
"...I DECIDED THAT CHICAGO REALLY NEEDED TO WORK ON ITS WELCOME WAGON PROGRAM.
14

MAUSER?
YEAH.
I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU...FROM ANGEL.
SWELL WHO'S ANGEL?
MEET ME AT THE SANTANGELO WAREHOUSE ON CANAL STREET AT MIDNIGHT.
COME ALONE.
CLICKBLLLLLZ
"THEY ALWAYS SAY THAT. WHO WAS I GONNA BRING? I'D LOST TRONN IN THE LOOP AND YOU HAD THE BEAR AT THE TV STATION.
"I GOT TO THE WAREHOUSE A LITTLE BEFORE MIDNIGHT. ALL EVENING LONG I TURNED THE NAME ANGEL OVER IN MY MIND. IT RANG NO BELLS."
CAUTION
NO TRES
MAUSER ...YOU ALONE?
NAW... DICK TRACY AND THE BOYS SHOULD BE—
KNOCK IT OFF. I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU FROM ANGEL.
YOU ALREADY SAID THAT. WHO'S ANGEL?
"AFTER THE FIRST FLASH OF PAIN, THE NIGHT WRAPPED ITSELF AROUND ME AND PULLED ME DOWN TO A COOL CONCRETE SNOOZE."
"SOMETIMES I GET THIS CREEPY FEELING ON THE BACK OF MY NECK IT USUALLY MEANS THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG.

"WHEN I FOUGHT MY WAY THROUGH THE FOG, A FEW THINGS BECAME CLEAR. FIRST, MY CONTACT WAS DANNY FLOYD, THUG FOR A LOCAL GANGSTER NAMED 'CHECKERS FONTAINE.' SECOND, HE WAS DEAD.
"THIRD, HE HAD BEEN KILLED WITH MY GUN. THAT LAST PART BOTHERED ME A LITTLE.
WEEE


ULP!
HIYA, MICKEY.
"ANGEL MORROW, HUH? NOW, MAYBE: BUT WHEN WE GREW UP TOGETHER BACK IN JERSEY, SHE WAS JANE ANN MORTON, AND, TO ME, SHE WAS WHERE THE SUN ROSE AND SET.
"EVERYBODY ASSUMED THAT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL WE'D GET MARRIED. I'D GO TO WORK AND SUPPORT JANE ANN WHILE SHE PURSUED HER LIFE-LONG DREAM OF BECOMING AN ACTRESS.
"ANGEL. SHE HADN'T CHANGED MUCH OVER THE YEARS. A LITTLE HARD AROUND THE MOUTH, MAYBE, BUT THE FACE AND FIGURE WERE STILL TRAFFIC STOPPERS...
"FOLLOWING OUR SENIOR YEAR, JANE ANN WENT TO SPEND A MONTH WITH HER RELATIVES IN CALIFORNIA.
"AND WHEN SHE CAME BACK, SHE WAS... DIFFERENT.
"THE TALL GAWKY GIRL I'D GROWN UP WITH WAS GONE. IN HER PLACE WAS A POISED, CLASSY, BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.
"AND, SHE DID WHAT ANY POISED, CLASSY, BEAUTIFUL WOMAN WOULD DO WITH A SCHLUB LIKE ME... SHE DROPPED ME LIKE A HOT ROCK. SHE SAID SHE HAD TO TAKE HER CAREER SERIOUSLY, AND ANY PERSONAL ENTANGLEMENTS WOULD GET IN THE WAY. WELL, I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY A GIRL LIKE THAT WOULD WASTE TIME ON A GUY LIKE..."
THE BOSS SAID TO WATCH FOR THE RUNT SHAMUS.
WHOA-OH!
WE GOTTA TALK, DOLL, BUT WE CAN'T DO IT HERE!
LET ME CHANGE... I KNOW A PLACE WE CAN GO.
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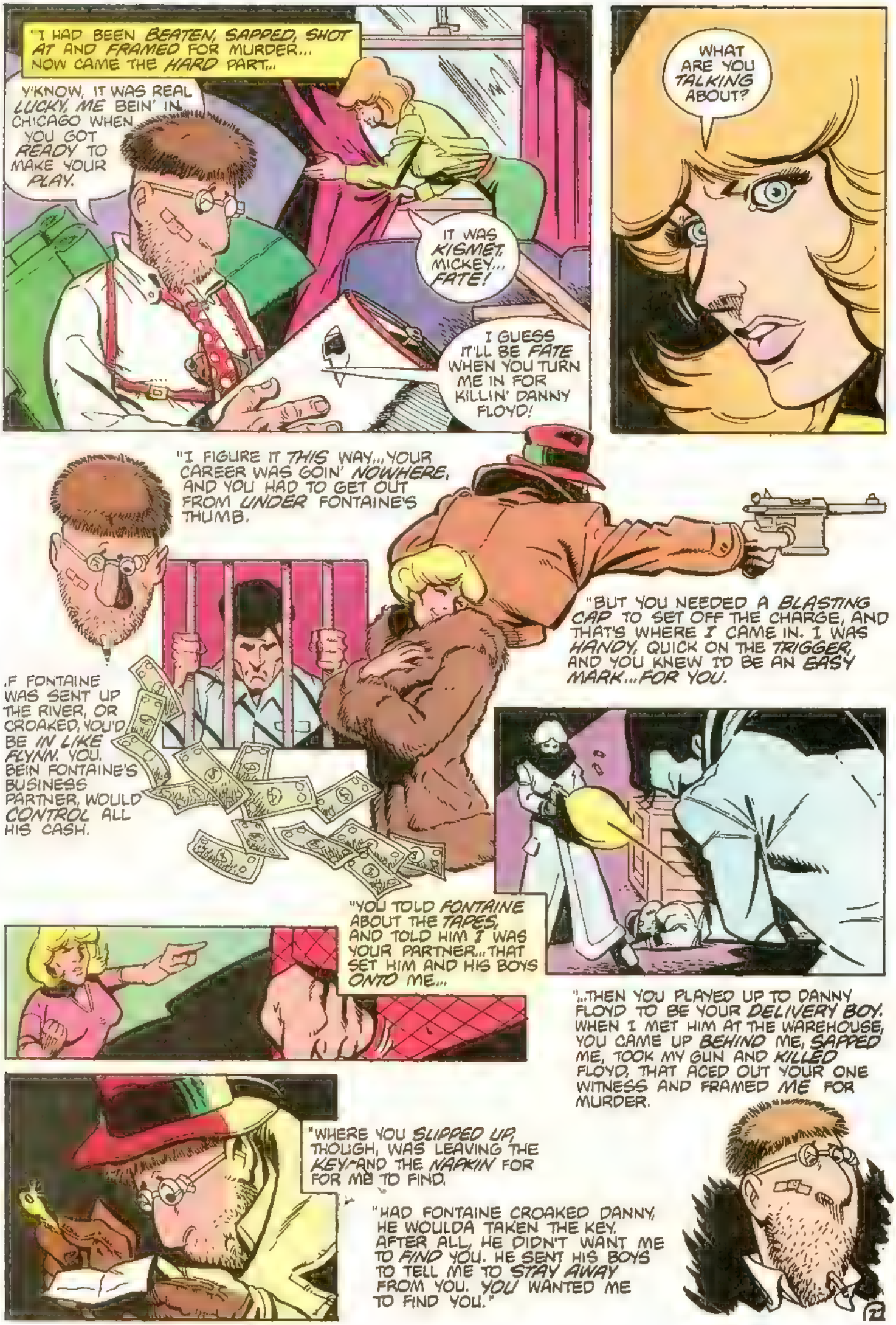
"ANGEL TOOK US TO AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACE WHERE WE REGISTERED UNDER THE NAME KOLCNZSKI."
OTEL
I THINK WE'LL BE OKAY HERE, JA-UH, ANGEL.
NOW, WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
OH, MICKEY.. I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN...
"A FEW YEARS AGO, I REALIZED MY CAREER WAS GOING NOWHERE. THEN I MET CHECKERS FONTAINE. HE WAS HANDSOME, CHARMING, AND SAID HE HAD CONNECTIONS IN SHOW BUSINESS...
"...BUT, THE FARTHEST MY CAREER WENT WAS SINGING IN THE KING'S ROW.
"I BECAME DISCOURAGED, WHEN I DISCOVERED CHECKERS HAD GANGLAND CONNECTIONS...
"...I TOLD CHECKERS WHAT I KNEW, AND I WANTED OUT. HE DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO MAKE ME STAY...EVEN MADE ME A LEGAL PARTNER IN HIS BUSINESSES. WHEN THAT DIDN'T WORK, HE THREATENED TO KILL ME. I KNEW THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY OUT...
"I HAD TO GET SOME INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE. I SECRETLY MADE TAPES OF HIS 'BUSINESS' MEETINGS AND HID THEM IN A LOCKER AT THE BUS DEPOT.
"BUT I NEEDED SOMEONE TO TAKE THE TAPES TO THE POLICE...
N.Y. NAMED BOAR AFFAIR
MIKE MAUSER
"I READ ABOUT YOU BEING IN CHICAGO AND KNEW IF I COULD TRUST ANYONE..."
I... COERCED ONE OF CHECKERS' MEN INTO DELIVERING THE KEY TO YOU, BUT...
LATER, DOLL... WE GOT COMPANY."

JANE, THE ROVER BOYS ARE BACK... C'MON!
I'LL STAY HERE AS A DIVERSION- TAKE THE KEY, AND GET THOSE TAPES!
FORGET IT...IF WE CAN GET DOWN THE BACK STAIRS, WE GOT IT MADE.
BUT, I...OH!
BUMP!
"AW, NUTS!
BLAM!
"ANGEL PICKED A HELLUVA TIME TA' GET CLUMSY!"
POW
KABLAM
BLAM!
QUICK, MICKEY...OUT THE WINDOW! GET THOSE TAPES!
ARE YOU NUTS? AND LEAVE YOU WITH THOSE CLOWNS?
I'LL BE OKAY...CHECKERS WON'T LET THEM HURT ME! THEY'LL JUST TAKE ME TO HIS PLACE!
OKAY... BUT I'LL COME FOR YOU, DOLL! I PROMISE!
OH MICKEY...
MMMPH!
"THE JUMP WAS THREE STORIES... I DIDN'T FEEL A THING...
"THE FALL MUST'VE KNOCKED SOMETHING LOOSE, THOUGH, CAUSE WHEN I CRAWLED OUTTA THE DUMPSTER, THINGS WERE STARTING TO... BOTHER ME..."

"I GOT THE TAPES AND CAME BACK TO YOUR PLACE, RED. I PUT IN A CALL TO DETECTIVE CRISPIN O'MALLEY, A CHICAGO COP I'D WORKED WITH A FEW YEARS BACK..."
CRIS, THIS IS MAUSER... I NEED A FAVOR...
MAUSER, THE LAST TIME I DID YOU A FAVOR, I ALMOST LOST MY BADGE...
BY THE WAY, WE GOT DANNY FLOYD DOWN HERE ON A SLAB WITH TWO 9MM SLUGS IN HIM... KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
NOPE. I NEED A LIST OF LEGIT BUSINESS HOLDINGS OF CHECKERS FONTAINE... IT'S IMPORTANT, CRIS...
"CRIS SAID HE'D CALL ME BACK. ALL I COULD DO WAS WAIT, CLEAN MY GUN, AND THINK ABOUT..."
ANGEL... LOVELY, SWEET BEGUILING... DECEITFUL...
ANGEL!!
SMAK!
TELL ME... HOW MUCH DO YOU AND THAT MYOPIC LITTLE GRUB WORM KNOW?!
YOU... CAN'T... PUSH ME ANYMORE!
OH, I CAN'T?
YOU KNOW, THE ONE THING YOU WANT MORE THAN ANYTHING IS YOUR CAREER. AND FOR THAT, YOU NEED YOUR BEAUTY...
AND WHEN I'M THROUGH...
KRACK!

KRAASH!
MICKEY!!
MAUSER!!
WASTE 'IM!!
BLAM! BLAM!
"FONTAINE'S GOONS WERE GOOD... VERY GOOD...
KRAKETTA! KRAKETTA! KRAKETTA!
;BUT NOT QUITE GOOD ENOUGH.
"FONTAINE MADE A BREAK... I KNEW WHAT HE WAS THINKING...
"...HE FIGURED I HAD TO BE OUTTA AMMO...
"...AND ONE OF HIS BOYS' GUNS WAS JUST WITHIN REACH...
"... HE MEASURED THE DISTANCE...
"WEIGHED THE ODDS...
"...MADE HIS MOVE...
"HE WAS RIGHT, OF COURSE... I WAS OUT OF AMMO...
"...BUT I'D WANTED TO TRY THIS STUNT EVER SINCE I SAW ROD CAMERON DO IT IN A WESTERN FILM."
OH, MICKEY... IT'S OVER!
"ANGEL WAS RIGHT...IT WAS OVER... ALMOST...


"I HAD BEEN BEATEN, SAPPED, SHOT AT AND FRAMED FOR MURDER... NOW CAME THE HARD PART...
Y'KNOW, IT WAS REAL LUCKY, ME BEIN' IN CHICAGO WHEN YOU GOT READY TO MAKE YOUR PLAY.
IT WAS KISMET, MICKEY... FATE!
I GUESS IT'LL BE FATE WHEN YOU TURN ME IN FOR KILLIN' DANNY FLOYD!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
"I FIGURE IT THIS WAY... YOUR CAREER WAS GOIN' NOWHERE, AND YOU HAD TO GET OUT FROM UNDER FONTAINE'S THUMB.
"BUT YOU NEEDED A BLASTING CAP TO SET OFF THE CHARGE, AND THAT'S WHERE I CAME IN. I WAS HANDY, QUICK ON THE TRIGGER, AND YOU KNEW I'D BE AN EASY MARK... FOR YOU.
IF FONTAINE WAS SENT UP THE RIVER, OR CROAKED, YOU'D BE IN LIKE FLYNN. YOU, BEIN FONTAINE'S BUSINESS PARTNER, WOULD CONTROL ALL HIS CASH.
"YOU TOLD FONTAINE ABOUT THE TAPES, AND TOLD HIM I WAS YOUR PARTNER... THAT SET HIM AND HIS BOYS ONTO ME...
"...THEN YOU PLAYED UP TO DANNY FLOYD TO BE YOUR DELIVERY BOY. WHEN I MET HIM AT THE WAREHOUSE, YOU CAME UP BEHIND ME, SAPPED ME, TOOK MY GUN AND KILLED FLOYD, THAT ACED OUT YOUR ONE WITNESS AND FRAMED ME FOR MURDER.
"WHERE YOU SLIPPED UP, THOUGH, WAS LEAVING THE KEY AND THE NAPKIN FOR FOR ME TO FIND.
"HAD FONTAINE CROAKED DANNY, HE WOULDA TAKEN THE KEY. AFTER ALL, HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO FIND YOU. HE SENT HIS BOYS TO TELL ME TO STAY AWAY FROM YOU. YOU WANTED ME TO FIND YOU."
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SCAPEGOAT IN FOUR COLORS PART 2

by CHARLES MEYERSON

PART TWO: CRACKING THE CODE

STIRRED UP BY Dr. Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent,* state lawmakers across the country late in 1954 began to form "study groups" to examine the dangers comic books posed to the youth of America.

Some state legislatures and city councils passed laws banning the sale of "crime comics" to kids under 18. Generally, those laws didn't survive challenges in the courts or vetoes from mayors and governors.

That was the atmosphere as the U.S. Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency began to study "the comic book menace." One of the star witnesses was William M. Gaines, then publisher of EC Comics (now Mad Magazine) — well known by fans for its wonderful art and creative scripting, but then under fire for graphically depicting adultery, ax-murders, kids killing their parents...

"JUST FOR THE RECORD," Gaines told me in 1978, "I *requested* the right to appear. Having requested it, I was subpoenaed. But I requested it, and I don't want it to sound like I was dragged there."

Gaines was in fine form to begin the hearing. His opening statement defended American kids as "citizens, entitled to select what to read. Do we think our children are so evil, simple-minded, that all it takes is a story of murder to set them to murder, a story of robbery to set them to robbery?"

Gaines was taking an appetite suppressant; at a key point in the hearing, it began to wear off, dulling his senses. The result was a public-relations disaster. He wound up attempting to defend an almost indefensible cover — a man with a bloody ax holding the severed head of a woman.

"A COVER IN bad taste," he said, might have "the head a little higher so that the blood could be seen dripping from it." Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee noted there was plenty of blood on the cover as it was.

The days to follow brought a fresh wave of public criticism of Gaines, EC Comics ... and of the industry.

Still, the subcommittee wound up its work rejecting "all suggestions of governmental censorship as being totally out of keeping with our basic American concepts of a free press operating in a free land for free people."

In Kefauver's words, "the public must be sold this idea of restricting purchases of comics to those carrying the (Comics Code) seal of approval."

THE CODE WAS off and running.

Among its first victims were EC Comics: no room for EC's best-selling *Vault of Horror* and *Crypt of Terror* under a code that banned the words "horror" and "terror" on comic book covers!

"I dropped the books I dropped," Gaines says, "not as a result of the committee's investigation, but as a result of wholesaler pressure, which was brought about by dealer pressure and parent-teacher-group pressure.

"The horror books made money right up to the last issue. The other books had been losing money anyway."

A FEW POST-CODE EC titles with thrilling names like *Psychoanalysis* didn't last more than a few issues. Their deaths demonstrated the real muscle behind the Code: magazine distributors.

As Frank Jacobs writes in his biography of Gaines, "Stack after stack came back, unopened by wholesalers ... (because) they didn't bear the (Code) Seal of Approval."

For most of the next two decades, the Code was as good as law. Between 1954 and 1969, according to comics historians Reinhold Reitberger and Wolfgang Fuchs, the Comics Code reviewed and approved 18,125 comics titles — the vast majority of U.S. comics sold during the time.

THE PEOPLE WHO created the Code were concerned comics might encourage violence among kids. Under the Code, though, kids may have found violence more attractive. Code rules prompted scripters to make gunplay look like a game: no one suffered; the good guys never killed anyone.

In the words of Reitberger and Fuchs, they just "planted the bullets with breathtaking precision into a man's upper arm, or shot their opponents' guns clean out of their hands."

IN 1971, Stan Lee decided to do a three-issue Spider-Man story about the dangers of drug addiction. Then-Code administrator Leonard Darvin said no.

IN A DECISION that made the pages of *The New York Times,* Lee published the issues anyway — without the seal.

The issues sold as usual. Distributors, retailers and readers didn't seem to notice.

But the Comics Code Authority noticed. On April 15, 1971, Code officials unanimously adopted the first changes in the Code, allowing "narcotics addition ... presented (only) as a vicious habit."

WHILE THEY WERE at it, they modified the Code to allow vampires, ghouls and werewolves to appear again in the pages of comics; to allow comic book police to die in the line of duty and comic book public officials to break laws, as long as the guilty were punished.

A few months after the changes, DC Comics published a Green Lantern/Green Arrow story similar to the Spider-Man story that prompted the changes. It won Code approval.

But the Code had cracked. It clearly wasn't the power in comics it had been. More on that story next time.

(If you are interested in reading more about Bill Gaines and the development of the Comics Code, look up a copy of Frank Jacobs' *The Mad World of William M. Gaines* (Bantam Books, 1973) and a long interview with Gaines in *The Comics Journal* #81, May 1983. And you might be surprised how much comics history you can unearth at your friendly neighborhood public library.)

(Charlie Meyerson, as ever, remains employed as a reporter and morning news anchor at WXRT Radio, Chicago.)

"AFTER THE KING'S ROW, YOU DELIBERATELY TOOK US TO A HOTEL RUN BY FONTAINE. I FOUND OUT WHO OWNED THE FLEABAG.
"YOU KNEW THE CLERK WOULD RECOGNIZE YOU AND CALL FONTAINE. THAT'S HOW THE TWO GOONS FOUND US...
"WHAT REALLY STARTED ME THINKING, THOUGH, WAS WHEN YOU TRIPPED IN THE HOTEL AND GAVE US AWAY. YOU NEED TO WORK ON YOUR ACTING, DOLL... YOU STAYED BEHIND TO FORCE A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN ME AND FONTAINE.
"AFTERWARDS, WITH FONTAINE OUTTA THE WAY, YOU'D MAKE SURE THE POLICE FOUND OUT WHOSE GUN KILLED DANNY FLOYD. NICE FRAME, DOLL.
CAN YOU... PROVE ANY OF THIS?
NAW... IT'S JUST THEORY...
BUT I CAN TELL THE COPS WHAT I THINK AND LET'EM TAKE IT FROM THERE.
AND I CAN MAKE SURE FONTAINE FINDS OUT ABOUT IT. HE'S GOT PLENTY OF FRIENDS ON THE OUTSIDE WHO'LL HELP YOU WATCH HIS MONEY.
YOU BETTER SPLIT NOW, DOLL!
MICKEY, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET IT END FOR US, ARE YOU... NOT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...
MICKEY...
DON'T...
...CALL... ME... MICKEY.
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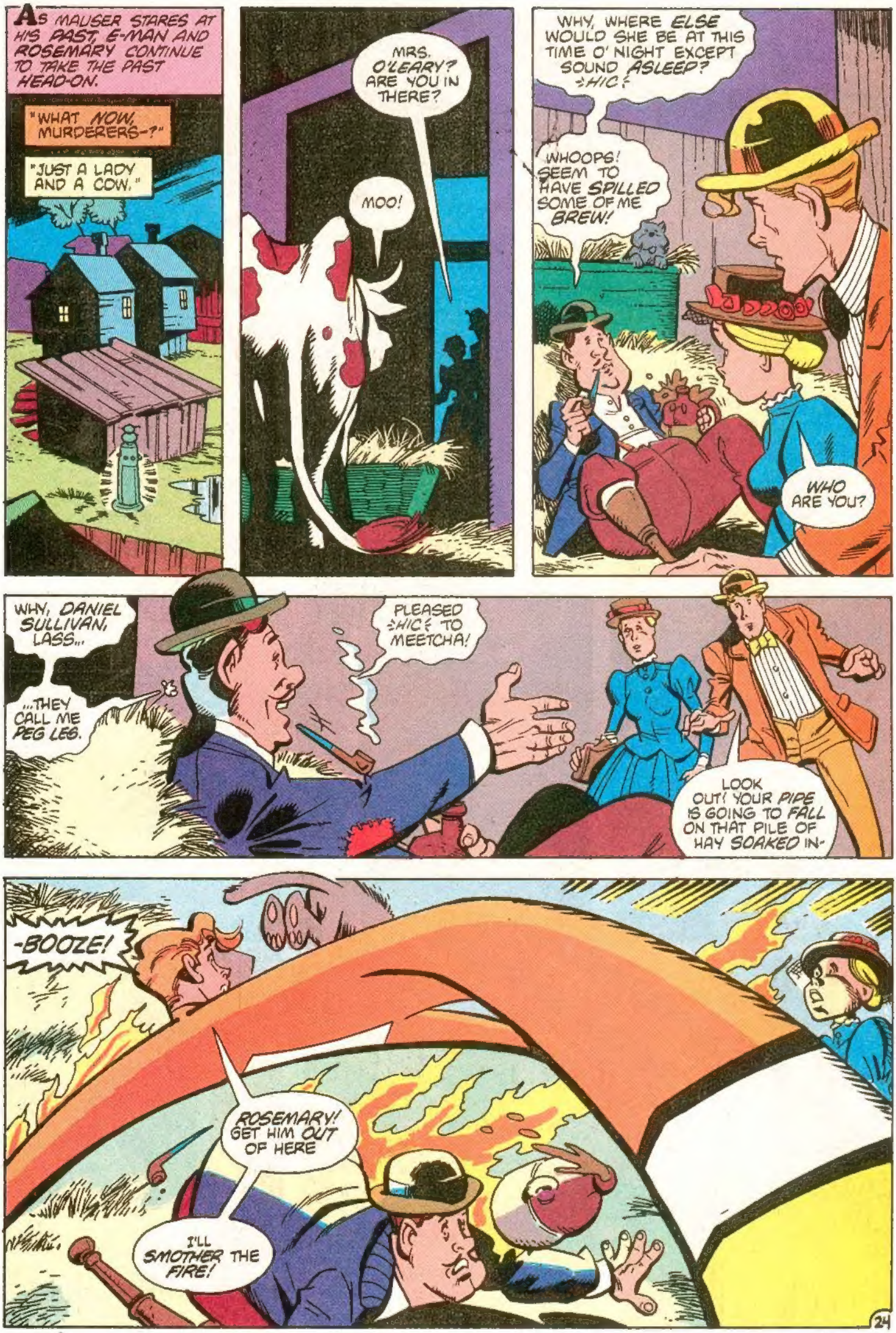
As Mauser stares at his past, E-Man and Rosemary continue to take the past head-on.
"WHAT NOW, MURDERERS-?"
"JUST A LADY AND A COW."
MRS. O'LEARY? ARE YOU IN THERE?
MOO!
WHY, WHERE ELSE WOULD SHE BE AT THIS TIME O' NIGHT EXCEPT SOUND ASLEEP? -HIC-
WHOOPS! SEEM TO HAVE SPILLED SOME OF ME BREW!
WHO ARE YOU?
WHY, DANIEL SULLIVAN, LASS...
...THEY CALL ME PEG LEG.
PLEASED -HIC- TO MEETCHA!
LOOK OUT! YOUR PIPE IS GOING TO FALL ON THAT PILE OF HAY SOAKED IN-
-BOOZE!
ROSEMARY! GET HIM OUT OF HERE
I'LL SMOTHER THE FIRE!

OH, NO! I JUST REALIZED WHAT THIS BARN IS! THE CHICAGO FIRE STARTED HERE!
AND I JUST PUT IT OUT!
ROSEMARY, THIS IS SERIOUS I'VE CHANGED HISTORY!
GOTTA FIND ANOTHER JUG-!
THE FUTURE IS GOING TO BE DIFFERENT IF CHICAGO DOESN'T BURN...
I SHOULD RESTART THE FIRE-
BUT I CAN'T HURT PEOPLE LIKE THAT!
BUT WHAT I CAN DO IS TAKE YOU HOME BEFORE YOU CAN DO ANY MORE DAMAGE!
OH, YARBLES!
VINNG!
VEENG
VINNG!
THE MACHINE HUMS. LIGHTS FLASH. AN OVERHEATED MECHANISM THROWS OFF SPARKS.
UNBEKNOWNST TO THE TIME TRAVELERS, A FIRE IS REKINDLED.
SOON, IT WILL SPREAD.
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THE 30th CENTURY.
THE EARTH IS A GARDEN. THE PEOPLE LIVE IN CLIMATICAL CONTROLLED ANTIGRAVITY CITIES. IT REALLY IS A NICE PLACE.
UNLESS YOU'RE FOURTEEN AND BORED.
THIS IS THE END OF THE LINE, ROSEMARY!
UH-OH. LOOKS LIKE MORE TROUBLE.
DON'T WORRY, E-MAN, WE'RE THE TRANSDIMENSIONAL POLICE—TIME DIVISION.
WE REALIZE THAT YOU KNOW LITTLE OF THE INTRICACIES OF TIME TRAVEL—BUT THIS YOUNG LADY SHOULD KNOW BETTER.
BELIEVE ME, OFFICER, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN!
OH, ROSEMARY, THERE'S SOMEONE HERE TO SEE YOU.
I...I DIDN'T HURT ANYTHING.
YES, OUR MONITORS CONFIRM THAT.
BUT OTHER "TEENY-HOPPERS" HAVE IN THEIR TIME-TRAVEL JOYRIDING.
THAT IS WHY TIME TRAVEL IS ILLEGAL!
WE CANNOT BE SUBJECTED TO RANDOM TEMPORAL INTERFERENCE!
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IF TIME TRAVEL IS ILLEGAL, HOW DO I GET HOME?
WE KNOW MUCH ABOUT YOUR TIME PERIOD, E-MAN. WITHOUT YOUR HELP, NO ONE ELSE IN YOUR ERA CAN USE THE MACHINE.
YOU'RE A SUPERHERO. WE CAN TRUST YOU WITH THE TIME MACHINE.
YOU'RE A SUPERHERO? MAY I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
E...M...A...N...
THANKS! I WASN'T REALLY DOING A TERM PAPER, BUT I DO COLLECT AUTOGRAPHS.
SOMETIME LATER- OR EARLIER-DEPENDING ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT...
NOVA-? ANYBODY HERE?
SHHH!
Z
Z
Next: VOODOOHOODOO